

C2 24. (Amended) A method of increasing a level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid in a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid is increased compared to the level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v.

C3 31. (Amended) A method of reducing a level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells in a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells is reduced compared to the level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v.--

Please add the following Claims.

35 38. (New) A method of reducing a level of at least one oxidative stress factor in the blood of a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of the at least one oxidative stress factor is reduced compared to the level of the at least one oxidative stress factor in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v and the *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v is administered to the mammal in need thereof in at least 25 mL of oatmeal gruel for a time period of from 3 to 6 weeks. *variable - active amounts in gruel*

39. (New) A method of increasing a level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid in a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid is increased

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compared to the level of the fecal concentration of propionic acid in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v and the *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v is administered to the mammal in need thereof in at least 25 mL of oatmeal gruel for a time period of from 3 to 6 weeks.

40. (New) A method of reducing a level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells in a mammal, comprising administering to a mammal in need thereof *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, wherein the level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells is reduced compared to the level of adhesion of monocytes to endothelial cells in the absence of *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v and the *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v is administered to the mammal in need thereof in at least 25 mL of oatmeal gruel for a time period of from 3 to 6 weeks.--

#### SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 11, 24, 31 are amended, and Claims 38-40 are added. Support for the amendment is found at page 2, line 36, to page 10, line 12, and in the original claims. No new matter is believed to be introduced by the amendment.

#### REMARKS

Claims 11 and 15-40 are pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants would like to thank Examiner Marx for indicating that Claims 19-21, 26-28, and 33-35 are "free from the art of record" (See page 7, line 23, of the outstanding Office Action).